

Assessment for / with / of Learning

Handout 5 – Department case study: Feedback on listening and reading tasks

Question: Should we give written feedback on Listening and Reading tasks, rather than always focusing on writing?

I experimented with giving written feedback on listening and reading when marking year 9 exercise books. I tried to give formative targets e.g. T: to use cognates and near-cognates to help you work out meaning. T: to focus on the use of different tenses and T: to identify vocab and structures to use in your own writing. Rather than starting from nothing, I used the new Framework Objectives and the NC progress levels to draw up a bank of targets. (See separate sheet of targets – Handout 7).

A few things were problematic:-

- 1) By the time pupils received the feedback they could not remember what the task was and I then had to explain to whole class what they had done and how I thought they could do better. They seemed less interested in this than in the written feedback on their writing which is far more personal.
- 2) Often it is difficult to tell where a pupil has gone wrong in a listening or reading and so you set vague targets which do not really move them on in their learning.

I then decided that it would be more beneficial (to pupils and in saving the teacher time) to discuss strategies with the whole class before and after doing a listening or reading activity. I had always done this informally and do it more at GCSE, but not often enough or in enough depth with Key Stage 3 classes.

I decided to give pupils a copy of the targets I had written but called them a 'Strategies for success in listening and reading in MFL' instead. I want to encourage them to refer to these when completing a task independently at home as well as in class. Before completing an activity pupils can identify and discuss which they will be able to use, and then evaluate their success. They can also write down which strategies they think they used so I can see this when marking their books. Sometimes it is better not to ask them to refer to these at the start, but to let them go wrong and make mistakes, and then come back to them after the task and ask what they were not doing.

Focusing on these targets or strategies has benefited my teaching as it has made me think of different ways of doing L and R exercises. E.g. using a listening in 2 or 3 different ways (prediction, gist, dictation) and then as a lead into speaking or writing. It has also made me more familiar with the skills the new Framework suggests all pupils need to develop in R and L in languages. It has become more of an oral feedback idea than a written feedback idea.

My conclusions on formative feedback on listening and reading

Formative written feedback on listening and reading exercises is difficult and it is perhaps more beneficial to do this feedback in a whole class way, drawing pupils' attention as often as possible to a wide range of strategies and making each reading or listening exercise really count for language and skills, rather than as a stand alone exercise.

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